How to do voice restructuring in a language without voice: Transitivity concord in Chechen

October 21, 2025

Phil Shushurin

Abstract

The paper presents an analysis of a construction known as Transitivity Concord in Chechen. I argue that this construction presents a novel and previously undescribed type of Voice Restructuring. In the Transitivity Concord Construction, certain matrix transitive verbs impose a requirement to embed a strictly transitive structure. I argue that this condition is in fact a requirement on the matrix verb to contain an agreeable (Absolutive) Direct Object in the embedded clause with which it establishes a long-distance Agree relation. The embedded verb in such a construction is shown to be syntactically deficient, despite bearing agreement morphology. The construction is analyzed in terms of Pietraszko (2021), Bryant, Kovač and Wurmbrand's (2023) system whereby the embedded structure is featurally dependent on the matrix structure in terms of ID. I depart from this system in assuming that (a) the embedded verb's deficiency needs not be conditional on its case assigning potential (Absolutive assignment is very low in Chechen) (b) the voice dependency might be encoded as just ϕ. Furthermore, I discuss the TCC's implications for both the theory of restructuring and infinitives.

1 Introduction: Transitivity Concord as Restructuring

One of the striking discoveries in the domain of the sentential complementation is the observation that embedded clauses may appear in highly reduced size and lack a syntactically projected subject. This type of complementation has been described for various languages (Aissen and Perlmutter 1983), (Bondaruk 2004), (Wurmbrand 2001), (Berger 2019), (Muller 2019), (Paul et al. 2021) and has been analyzed in terms of featural dependency between the embedded and the matrix clause. However, although many details vary from language to language, one invariant of such type of complementation has been that the dependency relation targets the functional domain of the embedded structure which is concerned with the external argument (Voice domain or Applicative domain) rather than with the internal argument, hence the term *Voice Restructuring*. For instance, in a well known case of German Long Passive (1), an influential line of analysis (Wurmbrand 2016), (Wurmbrand and Shimamura 2017), (Bryant, Kovač and Wurmbrand's 2023) (henceforth BKW) suggest that the embedded structure contains a subjectless reduced clause (VoiceP) which is featurally dependent on the features of the Voice of the matrix clause. A more general scheme of the restructuring with a downward valuation[1] relation is provided below, where the arrow indicates the direction of the featural dependency.

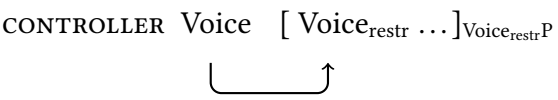
(1) **German Long Distance Passive**

dass der Traktor und der Lastwagen zu reparieren versucht
that [the tractor and the truck].NOM to repair tried
wurden
were.PASS.PL
'that they tried to repair the tractor and the truck'

(from Wurmbrand (2016), p. 251, ex. 3a)

[1]BKW argue that the direction of the valuation can be both up and down, in this paper, I will discuss downward dependencies.

(2) **Generalized scheme of restructuring**



In this paper, I provide evidence that the same type of dependency can involve not only the features of the external argument but the features of the internal argument as well.

I will show that this position is observed in what is known as *Transitivity Concord* or *Transitivity Matching* in Chechen, a Nakh-Dagestanian language (see Nichols 2011 for a brief description of this phenomenon in the closely related Ingush). A prominent characteristic property of this construction is a requirement for certain matrix transitive verbs to only take transitive structures as complements. In Chechen the condition is found with the verbs *d'a-j-ola* 'begin' and *čekx-d-alo* 'finish'. The phenomenon is illustrated below[2][3]:

(3) **Transitivity Condition**

a. Asa kniga j-eša d'a-j-ol-ira
   I.ERG book F-read PRF-F-begin-RPST
   'I began reading the book.'

b. *So/*Asa ida d'a-d-oli-ra
   I.ABS/I.ERG run PRF-N-begin-RPST
   'I began running.'

The examples above show that the matrix verb *d'a-j-ola* 'begin' only allows transitive embedded structures and disallows intransitive structures. I suggest that this pattern is due to the fact that the Absolutive argument in the embedded clause enters in an Agreement relation with the matrix verb. To that effect, objectless (roughly speaking, intransitive) subordinate structures are disallowed since the transitive matrix verb fails to find a suitable goal for agreement.

[2]The data below, unless indicated otherwise, is gather during elication sessions with three Chechen speakers born and raised in Sharoi region, Chechnya, Russia. All speakers are between 20 and 30 years of age.

[3]For space limitations, I will illustrate the phenomenon with the verb *begin*; the facts for the verb *finish* are identical in all relevant purposes.

(4) **Structure of Transitive Concord Construction**

$[DP_{ABS}\ v_{emb}]$ BEGIN/FINISH

In the construction in question, both the embedded and the matrix verb crossreference the Absolutive Direct Object's features (see the class prefix *j-* in the example (3a) on both the matrix and the embedded verb); any mismatch in these features results in ungrammaticality – this position, I will argue, constitutes an instance of Parasitic Agreement (Bhatt 2005, Keine 2023). Unlike many other languages with Parasitic agreement where failure for the defective verb to value its feature can result in default agreement, in Chechen the default option is remarkably absent and the failure to find a goal leads to the crash of the derivation.

The main claim of this paper is that sentences like (3a) can be analyzed in terms of Voice Restructuring and can be directly compared to such constructions as Long Passive, Crossed Control and Backward Control. Indeed, similar to some well-described cases of restructuring, we are dealing with a clausal embedding of a structure without a syntactically projecting subject, where a downward feature dependency is observed.

I will argue that this type of Restructuring (to which I will henceforth refer to as *V/Voice Restructuring*), can manifest in certain specialized environments where the low verbal head (v) is featurally bundled with the upper verbal head (Voice). According to this hypothesis, in some languages, including Chechen, the lower verbal head (v) and the higher head (Voice) are featurally dependent[4]. Such featural dependency may result, among other things, that (long-distance) object agreement by the (lower) v may have consequences for the featural makeup of the Voice head. I will provide additional evidence for v/Voice featural bundling by showing, for instance, that Voice in Chechen cannot bear independent morphology, which is evidenced, among other things, in the absence of voice alternations in the language.

(5) **v/Voice feature bundling hypothesis**

In Chechen, v and Voice are featurally bundled. Valuation of either v or Voice in feature α results in the immediate valuation of the other head (Voice or v) in the feature α.

[4]In many works, another notation is adopted: V for the lower verbal head and (little) v for the higher verbal head

In Chechen, I intend to show, the matrix verb takes a subjectless VoiceP as a complement which contains an Absolutive direct object. Crucially, the matrix verb establishes an Agree relation with the DO. The failure to find a suitable goal, i.e. an Absolutive DO, as in (3b), results in ungrammaticality. The reason of the ungrammaticality is thus similar to simple clauses where the verbs *begin* and *finish* behave as *bona fide* transitive verbs and disallow intransitive structures. The Transitivity Requirement is, under this view, due to the fact that the matrix clause needs a DP for valuing its ϕ-features. Due to the defectiveness of the embedded verb, it cannot value its undervalued ϕ-features in the absence of the matrix verb.

(6) **Transitive verbs BEGIN/FINISH require Absolutive DO either in their or in the embedded clause**

a. I [[lesson]$_{DP}$ BEGIN/FINISH]$_{vP}$ plain transitive

b. Lesson$_i$ [[t$_i$]$_{DP}$ BEGIN/FINISH]$_{vP}$ unaccusative

c. I [[book]$_{DP}$ read]]$_{VoiceP}$ BEGIN/FINISH]$_{vP}$ transitive embedding

d. I [[run]$_{VoiceP}$ BEGIN/FINISH]$_{vP}$ intransitive embedding

The embedded VoiceP in TCC is analyzed to be featurally dependent on matrix verb's features, namely in ID feature (Pietraszko 2019, BKW 2023) which ensures the sameness of the agent interpretation and in ϕ-features. Such a dependency between the verb in the matrix clause and the direct object in the embedded clause is not uncommon in Restructuring constructions (e.g. Long Object Passive in German and Crossed Control (Berger 2019), among others). In the Chechen case, this association, together with Parasitic Agreement, v/Voice bundling, Voice restructuring and the absence of default agreement results in what has been described as Transitivity Concord.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. In section 2, I provide the main empirical facts as well as an overview of the previous research. Section 3 presents an analysis. In section 4, I discuss several implications of the proposed analysis. Section 5 concludes.

2 Data

Chechen is a Nakh-Dagestanian language spoken predominantly in Chechnya, which is characterized by Ergative alignment, SOV basic word order and relatively rich verbal and nominal morphology (Khalidov et al. (2013); Dotton and Wagner (2017); Komen et al (2021)). Certain verbs exhibit overt morphological agreement with the Absolutive argument, which may be the sole direct argument in a monotransitive construction, as in (7a) and (7b) or the Internal argument in a transitive construction, as in (7c):

(7) a. Musa bazar-a v-oedu
Musa.V.ABS market-ALL V-go.PRS
'Musa goes to the market.'

b. Staka ohwa-d-yzh-ira
glass.D.ABS.SG PVERB-D-fall-RPST
'The glass fell.'

c. Ruslan-a bepig ursa-ca d-oxado
Ruslan-ERG bread.D.ABS.SG knife-INST.SG D-cut.PRES
'Ruslan cuts bread with a knife.'

The agreement with the Absolutive argument is manifested as a class prefix on the verb. The language possesses four different class prefixes in singular, with the *v-* and *j-* noun classes (genders) being partially sex-based (masculine and feminine, respectively). Different combinations of prefixes in the singular and in the plural constitute six distinct noun classes.

Certain verbs lack morphological agreement on the verb, which doesn't affect their syntactic properties – in all relevant aspects, such verbs behave identically to the morphologically agreeing verbs. For instance, the prefixless verb *eca* 'take, buy' can trigger class agreement on auxiliary verbs, as well as Ergative marking on the Subject (8b). In contrast, the verb -'i 'eat' in (8c) takes an agreement prefix. The two verbs have an otherwise similar syntactic behavior.

(8) **Verbs with and without a class prefix**

a. Asa mašina ijc-ira
1SG.ERG car.ABS.SG take-RPST
'I bought a car.'

b. Asa mašina oecu-r j-u
1SG.ERG car.ABS.SG take-IRR j-AUX
'I will buy a car.'

c. V-oaqqa stag xudar d-i'-na
V-old man.V.ABS.SG porridge.D.ABS.SG D-eat-PST.PRF
'The old man ate porridge.'

Furthermore, prefixed and non-prefixed verbs can be coordinated, as in the following examples show:

(9) Nana-s dama ijc-ina a bepig d-i'-na a
mother-ERG flour take-PST AND bread D-do-ABS.SG AND
'Mother bought some flour and made bread.'

To sum, the presence/absence of a class prefix has no bearing on the syntactic properties of the verb.

2.1 Transitivity

The focus of this paper are two transitive verbs *d'a-d-olo* 'begin' and *čekx-d-alo* 'finish' which select for either DP or clausal complements. These verbs have a broad inceptive and completive semantics, respectively, and can be translated into English as 'begin' and 'finish'.

(10) a. Asa urok d'a-j-oli-ra
I.ERG lesson PRF-F-begin-RPST
'I began the lesson.'

b. Asa urok čekx-j-ali-ra
I.ERG lesson PRF-F-finish-RPST
'I finished the lesson.'

Unlike the English verbs 'begin' and 'finish', these verbs are strictly transitive and cannot be used without a direct object, as the following examples show:

(11) a. *Urok d'a-j-oli-ra
lesson PRF-F-begin-RPST
int. 'The lesson began.'

b. *Urok čekx-j-ali-ra
lesson PFX-F-finish-RPST
'I finished the lesson.'

In the case of clausal complementation, such verbs are only compatible with the transitive construction in their embedded clausal complement. For example, intransitive constructions are unacceptable[5]. I will refer to this property as *Transitivity Requirement*.

(12) **Transitive v_{emb} 'read book' → good**
Asa kniga j-eša d'a-j-ol-ira
I.ERG book F-read PRF-F-begin-RPST
'I began reading the book.'

[5]Ungrammatical with any set of class prefixes.

(13) **Intransitive v_{emb} 'run' → bad**

a. *So/*Asa ida d'a-d-oli-ra

I.ABS/I.ERG run PRF-N-begin-RPST

'I began running.'

b. *So/*Asa ida/iza/xelxa-v-ala čekx-d-akkxi-ra

I.ABS/I.ERG run/smoke/dance-MASC-AUX PRF-N-finish-RPST

'I finished running/smoking/dancing.'

The transitive verbs *d'a-d-olo* and *čekx-d-alo* co-exist in the language with intransitive verbs *d-ola<d>olo* 'begin' and *čekx-d-akkxa* 'finish' which are generally intransitive[6] and are compatible with unaccusative structures, as in the following examples:

(14) a. Urok j-ola<j>eli-ra

lesson F-<F>begin-RPST

'The lesson began'

b. Urok čekx-j-ali-ra

lesson PRF-F-finish-RPST

'The lesson was over.'

In the case of sentential complementation, the intransitive matrix verbs impose no restriction on the nature of their complement: as the following examples show, they can embed both intransitive and transitive structures.

(15) **Transitive v_{emb} 'read book' → good**

a. So kniga j-eša v-ola<v>eli-ra

I.ABS book F-read M-begin-RPST

'I began reading a book.'

[6]Speakers strongly prefer intransitive uses of these verbs, with some speakers occasionally allowing transitive uses of such verbs as well. Such uses are also found in texts. The investigation of exact syntactic properties of such verbs is outside the scope of this work.

b. So ida v-ola<v>eli-ra
I.ABS run PRF-M-begin-RPST
'I began running.'

(16) **Intransitive v_{emb} 'run' → good**

a. So kniga j-eša čekx-v-ali-ra
I.ABS book read PRF-M-finish-RPST
'I finished reading a book.'

b. So ida čekx-v-ali-ra
I.ABS run PRF-M-finish-RPST
'I finished running.'

In both cases the complementation involves an infinitival (morphologically unmarked) verb form, which is a widespread clausal complementation strategy and is attested with other matrix verbs as well, see the example below:

(17) **Infinitival complementation**

Aslan surt dilla hwaž-na
Aslan.ABS portrait paint.INF try-PST
'Aslan tried to paint a portrait'.

The Transitive requirement in Chechen must hold locally; this means that the transitive structure containing an Absolutive DP must be contained in the immediately dominated sentential complement. If a transitive phrase is more than one clause boundary away from the matrix verb, such position results in ungrammaticality, see the example below.

(18) **The Transitive Requirement is local**

*Asa/*so kniga j-eša xaeža d'a-j-oli-ra

I.ERG/I.ABS book F-read try PRF-F-begin-RPST

'I began trying reading a book.'

Another point of distinction between the two constructions concerns the distribution of causative and negative morphology on the embedded predicate. As the following examples show, the TCC is incompatible with the causative and negative morphology on the embedded verb, as the following examples show.

(19) **TCC: Causative → bad**

*Asa kniga-š ca-j-eša d'a-j-oli-ra

I.ERG book-PL NEG-F-read PRF-F-begin-RPST

int. 'I began not reading books.'

(20) **TCC: Negation → bad**

*Asa cynga kniga j-eši-ta d'a-j-oli-ra

I.ERG he.ALL book F-read-CAUS PRF-F-begin-RPST

int. 'I began making him reading a book.'

In contrast, negation and causative are allowed in constructions with intransitive matrix verbs:

(21) **No TCC: Causative → good**

So kniga-š ca-j-eša v-ola<V>eli-ra

I.ABS book-PL NEG-F-read M-begin-RPST

'I began not reading a book.'

(22) **No TCC: Negation → good**

So cynga kniga j-eši-ta v-ola<v>eli-ra

I.ABS he.ALL book F-read-CAUS M-begin-RPST

'I began making him read the book.'

Throughout the paper, I will suggest the following constituency of the TCC, where the Ergative argument is contained in the matrix rather than in the embedded clause thereby rejecting a possible Backward Control Analysis.

(23) **Constituency of the Transitivity Concord Construction**

DP_{erg} [DP_{abs} v_{tr}] BEGIN/FINISH

Below, I will provide two pieces of evidence for this constituency. The first argument comes from the unavailability of emphatic reflexives[7] in Chechen as the following example shows. On the Polinsky and Potsdam's view, the availability of emphatic reflexive on the left edge is indicative of the PRO in the matrix clause; the Chechen data thus provides no evidence to that effect,

(24) *Ajs-ajsa [asa kniga j-eša d'a-j-ol-ira]

self-ERG I.ERG book F-read PRF-F-begin-RPST

'I myself began reading the book.'

The second argument comes from the word order. Apart from the basic word order, speakers also allow the following word orders, which demonstrate that speakers prefer moving the $DP+V_L$ complex rather than V+V, see (25). What this example shows is that the Ergative subject is clearly contained higher than other arguments.

(25) a. Kniga j-eša asa d'a-j-oli-ra

book read I.ERG PRF-F-begin-RPST

b. *J-eša d'a-j-oli-ra asa kniga

read PRF-F-begin-RPST I.ERG book

[7] Cf. the grammaticality of such construction with in Tsez (Polinsky and Potsdam 2002) which is taken as evidence for a backward control analysis

It is worth noting at this point that the embedded structures are of a demonstrably small size. To that effect, such constructions cannot contain subjects, as the following examples show:

(26) *Ahmad-a [Hasan-a kniga j-eša] d'a-j-ol-ira
Ahmad-ERG Hasan-ERG book F-read PRF-F-begin-RPST

While the ungrammaticality of such examples could be attributed to pragmatic factors, the following examples show that such structures cannot contain emphatic reflexives. To dismiss possible analyses where the emphatic reflexive is contained in the matrix clause, it is worth showing that the embedded structure here is preposed to the position above the subject. Such examples (see (27) below) are judged ungrammatical.

(27) *Ajs-ajsa kniga j-eša d'a-j-ol-ira **asa**
self-ERG book F-read PRF-F-begin-RPST I.ERG
'I myself began the lesson.'

As is typical for Ergative languages of the region, Chechen transitive clauses contain an Absolutive (patientive) and Ergative (agentive) arguments. The case marking in two-place verbal predicates is heavily contingent on the thematic interpretation of the arguments; to that effect, other types of predicates, such as verbs of perception, trigger Dative marking on the external argument. Importantly, the construction in question requires ERG-ABS case patterns and is thus impossible with perception verbs (which assign Dative to the subject).

(28) **TCC: perception verbs → bad**

a. Ahmad-a stigal gi-na
Ahmad-ERG sky see-PST
int. 'Ahmad saw the sky.'

b. *Ahmad-a stigal gan d'a-joli-ra
Ahmad-ERG sky see.INF PRF-begin-PST
int. 'Ahmad started seeing the sky.'

Ditransitive constructions in Chechen can contain only one Absolutive argument (THEME), the benefeciary is usually marked Dative. Ditransitive clauses are compatible with the construction in question.

(29) Ahmad-a Zarina-na burka j-ael-la
Ahmad-ERG Zarina-DAT ball J-give-PST
'Ahmad gave Zarina a ball.'

(30) Ahmad-a Zarina-na burka j-ae-la d'a-j-oli-ra
Ahmad-ERG Zarina-DAT ball j-give-PST PRF-j-begin-PST
'Ahmad began giving Zarina a ball.'

The data above can be summarized as follows. In the studied construction, the embedded structure must contain a transitive verb (which projects Ergative and Absolutive, when used independently); such clauses must contain an Absolutive argument in the internal argument position, the external argument cannot be realized and it does not appear to project syntactically.

In subsequent sections, I will suggest that TCC involves a restructuring relation between the embedded and matrix structure with the embedded structure being structurally deficient. I will suggest that the matrix and the embedded verb form a complex predicate and need a Absolutive DP as a Goal for a Agreement probe. The same value of ϕ-features is then distributed between the matrix and embedded predicate as a result of feature sharing.

2.2 Previous research

The requirement of certain matrix verbs (such as *d'a-d-olo* and *čekx-d-alo*) to merge only with transitive complements has been described in Nakh literature (for example by Nichols (2011) for Ingush) and has been variously called *Transitivity Concord* or *Transitivity Attraction*. For instance, Nichols remarks that while transitive subordinate structures in Ingush can be either

embedded under transitive or intransitive matrix verbs 'begin' and 'finish', "while an intransitive complement can take only intransitive 'start' or 'finish'" (Nichols 2011:482). Although she doesn't provide ungrammatical examples, Nichols illustrates the generalization with transitive subordinate structures like the VP 'drink tea' in the example below, containing a Absolutive internal argument, embedded under transitive verbs like *duola-* 'to start' (30), and with intransitive subordinate verbs, embedded under transitive or intransitive matrix verbs (31):

(31) **Transitive matrix verb embedding a transitive structure; Ingush**

Pxi' dealcha txo chei mala duola-lu
five D.finish.CVTEMP 1P.EX tea drink.INF D.start-INTRANS
'We usually start drinking tea at 5:00.' (Nichols 2011)

(32) **Intransitive matrix verb embedding transitive or intransitive structures; Ingush**

a. Chaarx c'eaxxaa qesta juola-jalar
wheel suddenly turn.INF J.start-J.INTRANS.WP
'The wheel suddenly started turning.'

b. Muusaaz siexan kinashkja diishaa jistie-deaqqar
Musa.ERG yesterday book D.read.CVANT finish-D.TRANS.PRS
'Yesterday Musa finished reading the book.' (Nichols 2011)

I am unaware of any analysis of the Transitivity Concord facts besides the one that might be alluded to by Nichols' terms *Concord* or *Matching*, which are used descriptively rather than theoretically in her work.

3 Analysis

3.1 Evidence for downwards valuation

I start this section by establishing a downward direction of agreement between the matrix and the embedded verbs, as indicated in (33). In this structure, the ϕ-features of the matrix verb acquired from agreeing with the DO (i.e. *book*) in a long-distance fashion are passed down to the embedded verb.

(33) I [[book]$_{\text{DP}}$ read]$_{\text{VoiceP}}$ BEGIN/FINISH]$_{\text{vP}}$

Perhaps, the strongest piece of evidence for (33) can be drawn from the embedding properties from the two intransitive (see 34-35) verbs *d-eša* 'study', *j-eša* 'read (intr.)', which bear lexically determined but syntactically active gender prefixes *d-*; *j-*. Crucially, these verbs cannot be contained in TC's complement clauses.

(34) *Asa j-eša d'a-j-oli-ra
I.ERG F-read PRF-F-begin-RPST
'I began reading.'

Before proceeding to the main argument, several words are in order about morphosyntactic properties of these two verbs, which are remarkable in several respects. First, the verbs *ješa* and *deša* can assign Ergative case to the Subject, with the Absolutive marking being disallowed:

(35) a. Asa j-eša-r j-u
I.ERG F-read-IRR F-AUX
'I will read.'

b. *So j-eša-r j-u
I.ERG F-read-IRR F-AUX
int. 'I will read.'

(36) a. Asa d-eša-r d-u
I.ERG D-read-IRR D-AUX
'I will study.'

b. *So d-eša-r d-u
I.ERG D-read-IRR D-AUX
int. 'I will study.'

Outside of these verbs, Ergative marking seems to be dependent on Absolutive and is disallowed in constructions lacking a direct object. In this way, Chechen can be contrasted with the closely related Tsova Tush (also known as Bats) (Holisky 1989), as well as certain other languages of the region, where the Ergative case marking is shown to be conditioned on the agentivity of the lexical verb. For instance, in Chechen, Ergative marking is strictly disallowed with such (agentive) verbs as *len* 'talk', where the Subject must be marked Absolutive.

(37) So/*asa Zarema-x loe
I.ABS/I.ERG Zarema-LAT talk.PRS
'I talk about Zarema'

I leave the full analysis of Ergativity outside the scope of this paper, suggesting preliminarily that the Chechen Ergative assignment may be sensitive to the featural makeup of the v-Voice complex, more specifically, that the Ergative is assigned by Voice if the verb has DO's ϕ-features. (See Deal (2010) for the similar data in Nez Perce, as well as an analysis).

These verbs are historically derived from the root *-eša* and contain fossilized lexically determined class prefixes: *d-* and *j-* respectively. Unlike ordinary transitive verbs, where the class prefix marks the features of the Absolutive argument, the class prefix doesn't crossreference the internal argument and is lexically determined. To that effect, the verb *-eša* 'read (tr.)' enters the derivation with unvalued ϕ-features while the verbs *d-eša* 'study' and *j-eša* 'read (intr.)' have their agreement feature determined in the lexicon. Recall that all other intransitive verbs either

have an unvalued class prefix or do not possess a morphological prefix at all.

(38) Lexical entries for *e-ša* 'read (tr.)', *d-eša* 'study' 'read (intr.)', *j-eša* 'read (intr.)'

a. *-eša* 'read (tr.)' (class feature unvalued)

b. *d-eša* 'study (intr.)' (class feature *-d*)

c. *j-eša* 'read (intr.)' (class feature *-j*)

Unlike the transitive verb *-eša* 'to read', such verbs lack a syntactically projected direct object. The fact that the internal argument is not represented in syntax can be evidenced by from the difference in the semantic interpretation of (39a) and (39b). While (39a), similarly to its English counterpart, implies that the book has been read to the end, no such implication is present in (39b) (See Næss 2007), (Næss 2009) for a discussion).

(39) a. Aslan-o kniga j-eš-na
Aslan-ERG book.class.j j-read-PRF
'Aslan has read a book/the book.'

b. Aslan-o j-eš-na
Aslan-ERG j-read-PRF
'Aslan has been reading'

The hypothesis that examples like (34)-(35) include an omitted indefinite pronoun, such as 'something', can be rejected due to the existence of at least two distinct prefixes, namely *j-* and *d-*, in these constructions. It remains unclear why such a pronoun would lead to variations in class/number agreement based on the lexical semantics (viz. *read* vs. *study*). The hypothesis that there could be two different, otherwise absent null/elided indefinite pronouns is probably fringe and without independent evidence.

That the ϕ-features borne on these verbs are indeed syntactically active features and not fossilized segments can be drawn from the facts that in periphrastic construction with agreeing

auxiliaries, these verbs trigger multiple exponence of the same feature both on the lexical verb and on the auxiliary, as examples (34)-(35) show. To that effect, with future tense, which is formed periphrastically by attaching the *be* auxiliary to the irrealis form of the verb, the prefix *j-* must be exponed both on the irrealis form and on the auxiliary. For the verb *d-eša* the same position is held: the prefix *d-* must be exponed both on the lexical and the auxiliary part of the construction.

To sum up, the verbs *j-eša* and *d-eša* are intransitive and still cannot appear in TCC, suggesting that the features on the embedded verb cannot serve for the valuation of the matrix verb.

The structure of the main argument of this subsection is as follows: The ungrammaticality of examples like (33) where the embedded part of the TCC contains syntactically active ϕ-features but doesn't contain an Absolutive object provides evidence that the matrix verb can value its features only by agreeing with a suitable DP, and not from any other source such as an embedded verb. If TCC involved upward valuation of the matrix features by the embedded features, we would expect (33) to be grammatical, since the syntactically active features on the embedded verb would be suitable to value the probe on the superordinate verb.

In the subsequent exposition, I will assume explicitly the mechanics where the matrix verb agrees with the embedded Absolutive DP, and subsequently passes its features down to the embedded verb. An alternative account, however, might suggest that both verbs agree with the same argument[8], namely the Absolutive DO of the embedded clause. One additional piece of (indirect) evidence for the downward valuation comes from the fact that the embedded structure is demonstrably deficient in not containing a subject. In a restructuring account, adopted here, such a dependency suggests a downward[9] dependency (which is achieved here by the means of ID feature, see below).

The downward mechanics of the syntactic dependency, outlined above, can provide a simple and straightforward account for the main datum of this paper, namely the ungrammaticality of TCC with intransitive embedded structures. To that effect, the ungrammaticality in the current

[8]See (Nevins 2004), (Oxford 2017) for the discussion of such theoretical options with connection to the Activity Condition.

[9]BKW propose that the direction of the valuation can be both upward and downward. However in all considered cases the featurally deficient clause in the one which lacks a (canonical) subject

system arises because the matrix verb fails to value its ϕ-probe. While ϕ-agreement has been shown to be fallible (Preminger 2011, 2014), (Kramer 2014), a.o., a failed probe must possess a default strategy to survive the derivation. I suggest that in Chechen, the default option is not available which results in that (a) every instance of ϕ-agreeing verb is a result of the agreement with a nominal, (b) failure to find a suitable goal for a probe results in ungrammaticality.

The data above indicates that TC verbs are not licensed even if the embedded verb contains relevant ϕ-features, which could – potentially – be probed by the matrix verb. I conclude that the matrix TC verb probes for the *embedded Absolutive DP* rather than with the clause (or any verbal head or its features) itself and that the embedded verb cannot serve as a source for ϕ-features for the matrix verb.

In this way, Transitivity Concord verbs do not pose any requirements on the argument structure properties of the embedded verb per se. Instead, such verbs pose a requirement on the embedded clause to contain a potentially agreeable (that is Absolutive) DP, which may or may not be embedded in a clausal structure. The two options are represented schematically in (40), and the argumentation is summarized in (40).

(40) **Two configurations for Transitive Verbs**

a. DP V$_{TC}$

b. [DP V] V$_{TC}$

(41) **Transitive requirement of Transitive Matrix Verbs**

a. TCC can only embed structures containing an Absolutive argument

b. The matrix verb must agree with an Absolutive Direct Object

This position can be directly compared to simple clauses, where, to recall, the same verb requires both (Ergative) Agent and an (Absolutive) Theme.

(42) a. *So/*Asa ida d'a-d-oli-ra
I.ABS/I.ERG run PRF-N-begin-RPST
'I began running.'

b. *Urok d'a-j-oli-ra
lesson PRF-F-begin-RPST
int. 'The lesson began.'

TCC constructions provide some additional evidence for the lack of a syntactic relation between the Absolutive DP and the embedded predicate. This concerns the anti-reconstruction property of TCC embedded clauses. More specifically, speakers strongly prefer wide scope, with respect to the matrix predicate, for any quantifier contained inside the Absolutive DP. For instance, if the matrix clause contains a sentential negation, the embedded quantifier must scope over matrix negation. In contrast, no scope constraints are found in the corresponding intransitive construction (45).[10]

(43) Asa derriga kyuraš della ca d'a-d-oli-ra
I.ERG all windows open NEG PRF-d-begin-PST
int. 'I didn't begin opening all windows' *NEG>>ALL; ALL>>NEG

(44) So derriga kyur-aš della ca v-olaveli-ra
I.ABS all windows open NEG v-begin-PST
'I didn't begin opening all windows' NEG>>ALL; ALL>>NEG

Although the anti-reconstruction isn't by itself suggestive of the direction of agreement, it allows us to look at the studied construction in close comparison with certain other subordinate constructions. To that effect, Bobaljik and Wurmbrand (2004) present evidence from several unrelated languages where subordinate clauses demonstrate the anti-reconstruction property. Among

[10]One can independently show that the studied quantifier (viz., *derriga*) is indeed a nominal modifier and is contained inside the DP.

other constructions, the antireconstruction is illustrated by the authors by long distance passive constructions such as the following German sentence (45). As Bobaljik and Wurmbrand (2004) show, the DP in the embedded structure cannot take the low scope.

(45) weil [nur deutsche Autos [zu reparieren versucht]] wurden
since only German cars.(NOM) to repair tried were
*'They tried to only repair German cars.' ALL>>NEG;
'They only tried to repair German cars.' Bobaljik and Wurmbrand (2003)

Bobaljik and Wurmbrand propose explicitly that the low scope of the negation like in the previous example are banned due to the lack of Agree relations between the embedded verb and the embedded predicate. I take the antireconstruction facts in Chechen as evidence for the syntactic association of the DO with the matrix verb[11].

If the assumption that the Absolutive DP agrees with the matrix predicate is correct, then in both cases (namely in LOM and TCC), we are dealing with a long-distance dependency between the semantic argument of the embedded clause, marked Direct Case (Nominative or Absolutive), and the matrix predicate. The Transitivity requirement in the Chechen construction can now be directly linked to the fact that the Long Distance passive transformation is applied to transitive constructions, where the internal argument is promoted to the subject position, crossing the clause boundary and surfacing as a syntactic argument of the matrix verb.

Before concluding this discussion, several remarks on the possibility of raising of the Absolutive DO are in order. In the proposed analysis, I have assumed explicitly that the DO remains in situ and is probed by the matrix verb in this position. Such long-distance dependencies are common in Nakh-Dagestanian languages (Polinsky and Potsdam 2001), (Bhatt and Keine 2017), (Haspelmath 1999), (Khalilova 2007), (Polinsky 2020).

With this being said, I have failed to find clear evidence for an overt or a covert movement of the Absolutive DP (or for a lack thereof)). To start, the evidence from the word order suggests

[11] See Bhatt and Keine (2016) for an alternative analysis of antireconstruction effects

that even if the DO moves overtly, it doesn't land higher than the matrix clause's arguments, as the following examples show.

(46) a. Ahmad-a Zarina-na burka j-ae-la d'a-j-oli-ra
Ahmad-ERG Zarina-DAT ball j-give-PST PRF-j-begin-PST
'Ahmad began giving Zarina a ball.'

b. ?? Ahmad-a burka Zarina-na j-ae-la d'a-j-oli-ra
Ahmad-ERG ball Zarina-DAT j-give-PST PRF-j-begin-PST
'Ahmad began giving Zarina a ball.'

Furthermore, the facts in (47), where v+DO are able to move together suggest that the DO, at least on the surface, remains in the embedded clause.

(47) a. Kniga j-eša asa d'a-j-oli-ra
book F-read I.ERG PRF-F-begin-RPST

b. *J-eša d'a-j-oli-ra asa kniga
F-read PRF-F-begin-RPST I.ERG book

Another hypothetical option remains for the DO to raise to a higher position while remaining in the embedded clause. Such movement would be string-vacuous and would not affect the surface order. The possibility of such string-vacuous dependencies for Absolutive internal arguments in Ergative languages is heavily discussed in the literature on Ergativity, an interested reader can be referred to (Polinsky 2017), a.o..

For the current purposes, it should be noted that the technicalities of such dependencies, should they exist, are largely orthogonal to the main line of the argumentation; nothing in my analysis crucially hinges on the existence of such a movement.

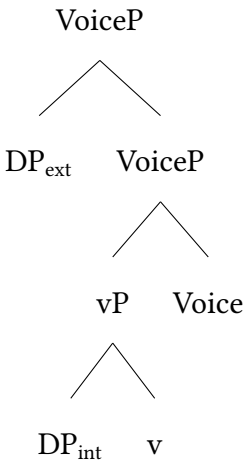
3.2 Proposal

Before proceeding to the proposal, let's recap on the main points of the empirical landscape. We are dealing with a subordinate construction where the matrix verb selects for a subjectless clause which obligatorily contains a direct (Absolutive) object. Based on the scope facts, as well as data from prefixed unergatives, I suggest that the embedded Direct object agrees with the matrix, rather than with the embedded verb. Importantly, the missing external argument is necessarily interpreted as an Agent ruling out examples like (48).

(48) *Ahmad-a stigal gan d'a-j-oli-ra
Ahmad-ERG sky see.INF PRF-F-begin-PST
int. 'Ahmad started seeing the sky.'

I adopt the fairly commonly adopted split-v hypothesis (Hale and Keyser (1993), Kratzer (1994, 1996), and Marantz (1997)), according to which the lower verbal head (v) and the higher verbal head (Voice) are responsible for introducing the internal and the external arguments, respectively.

(49) **The structure of the Chechen verbal spine**



To model the interclausal dependency, I employ some basic tenets and machinery of Bryant, Kovač, Wurmbrand (2023). The main features of the system adopted in my analysis are the following. First, I assume that the embedded structure in TCC is a subjectless VoiceP directly embedded

under the matrix transitive verb. Second, I assume that the embedded verbal structure is endowed with an unvalued ID feature. The embedded v/Voice in the TCC construction can be analyzed as having unvalued ϕ and ID. Similarly to WKB and Pietraszko's analysis, the ID feature is defined as responsible for the interpretation of the Agent (i.e. the argument introduced by Voice). To that effect, the interpretation of any other argument in the embedded clause is unaffected by ID valuation, and, consequently, the presence/absence of the feature on the (lower) v head is consequential both for the derivation and the interpretation. The ID feature bears a referential index; embedded Voice's agreeing in ID feature with the matrix verb ensures that the embedded Voice has the same subject interpretation as the matrix structure: in this way, in TCC, the embedded subject is interpreted as the same as the subject of the matrix structure. Third, I assume that in addition to the ID feature, the embedded Voice bears unvalued ϕ-features. The featural makeup of this type of Voice (Voice_{R}), as well as plain, non-deficient Voice are provided below:

(50) **Featural makeup of Voice and Voice_{R}**

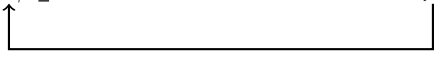
a. Voice: ID:*n*; ϕ:_

b. Voice_{R}: ID:_ ; ϕ:_

In TCC constructions, the direction of the valuation of both types of features is downward. The DO is agreed by the matrix verb which subsequently passes its features to the embedded verb. The main rationale for the downward valuation of the ϕ features are, to reiterate, the facts from construction with objectless unergatives.

The scheme of such mechanics is provided below, where the arrow indicates the direction of valuation.

(51) I [[book]$_{\text{DP}}$ read $\underset{\text{ID:}\underline{n}\text{; }\phi\text{:}\underline{i}}{\text{Voice}_{\text{R}}}$]$_{\text{Voice}_{\text{R}}\text{P}}$ BEGIN/FINISH $\underset{\text{ID:}n\text{; }\phi\text{:i}}{\text{Voice}}$]$_{\text{VoiceP}}$



What is crucially missing in this system is the mechanism of the ϕ-valuation on Voice and, subsequently, the exact valuation of the embedded verb, whereby, as with other transitive verbs

in the language, the ϕ-valuation is supposed to proceed on the v, rather than on the Voice level. What is to be modeled here, is (a) the fact that the DO values both v and Voice in the matrix clause and (b) the fact that in the embedded clause, the valuation of the Voice leads to the valuation of v.

In order to model this, I propose explicitly that the v and the Voice heads are featurally bundled, that is to say that these two heads are bound to possess an identical featural makeup. More formally, building on Pesetsky and Torrego's (2007) feature sharing framework, I suggest that the ϕ-features on the two heads are co-indexed and share their features even before this feature may be valued.[12] In almost all cases, the ϕ-features are supposed to enter the derivation unvalued, and any valuation of an instance in one head suum factum values the instance of ϕ on the other head. In the cases where the value of ϕ is lexically determined, such as with the verbs *ješa* and *deša*, the value of ϕ is, by co-indexation, may value Voice and higher functional heads.

(52) **v/Voice featural bundling Hypothesis**

Any instance of ϕ-feature on v is coindexed with an instance of ϕ on Voice and vice versa.

Any valuation of ϕ on v triggers the valuation of ϕ on Voice and vice versa.

To validate this hypothesis, several remarks on the Agreement in Chechen are in order. Many of the described facts are generally characteristic for the Nakh-Dagestanian morphosyntax. An interested reader can be referred to (Dotton Wagner 2017), (Nichols 2011), (Polinsky 2021) for more information on Agreement, Case and other aspects of A-Syntax in Nakh-Dagestanian.

The starting point is the observation that DO's features in Chechen can be exponed on different verbal heads in the structure, which include: the lexical verb or higher functional heads (such as Asp, T etc.). On the other hand, structures with Absolutive external arguments; such as

[12] Alternatively, one can suggest Feature Chaining mechanics (Keine 2023) and syntactic spanning of the two heads. The syntactic bundling of v/Voice was suggested in Harley (2017), Coon and Preminger (2013), Folli, Harley and Karimi (2005) who discuss several languages including Chol and Persian to propose that v and Voice syntactically project a single head. While Chechen bears much resemblance to the proposed voice-bundling languages in for instance lacking passive morphology and extensive use of light verbs, I leave the valdation of this analysis as applied for Chechen data for future. The syntactic voice-bundling of course retains the prediction that voice incorporation must have consequences for the features of the v.

Unergatives and Transitive structures, the same heads bear the inflection of the external argument, as is shown in (55).[13]

(53) Asa kniga j-eša-r j-u
I.ERG book F-read-IRR F-AUX
'I will read a book.'

(54) a. Zarina škol-e j-oed-u
Zarina school-ALL F-go-prs
'Zarina goes to school.'

b. V-oaqqa-ų stag-a xudar d-i'-na
V-old-OBL man.V.SG-ERG porridge.D.ABS.SG D-eat-PST.PRF
'The old man ate porridge.'

An emerging generalization can be stated as follows. In simple monoclausal constructions, the DO's features can be borne by the heads which can otherwise bear the features of the External Argument. More generally, this can be stated as follows: the v and Voice heads are featurally interdependent. This position can be contrasted with what we find in Accusative languages. To this effect, in Accusative languages with no (overt) object agreement, object's features never appear on high functional heads, unless the DO is raised to a higher position. Similarly, in Accusative languages with object agreement, in the absence of DO's raising, it is the external argument's features that may be exponed on higher functional heads, not DO's.

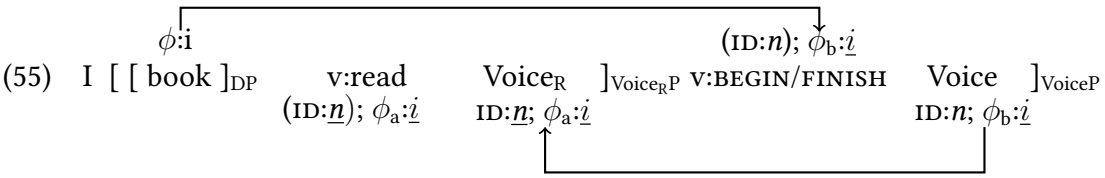
Another, although perhaps a related datum, is the apparent lack of Voice alternations in Chechen. To that effect, the language lacks passive and antipassive morphology (Dotton and Wagner 2017). The lack of voice morphology specifications correlates well with the v/Voice feature

[13]One notable apparent exception for this generalization are bi-absolutive constructions, for which a bi-clausal analysis has been proposed; see Laka (2006); Coon (2009); Kazenin (2001) for a bi-clausal analysis of the bi-absolutive construction for different languges including Nakh-Dagestanian.

bundling generalization: the language is supposed to be unable to have a passive (or antipassive) specification independently of the v head.[14]

With the v/Voice feature bundling hypothesis, the mechanics of feature valuation now looks as follows (55). In this diagram, the embedded and the matrix v/Voice pairs are coindexed (indicated as a and b, respectively). All verbal heads enter the derivation with their ϕ-features unvalued. The DO values the matrix v (BEGIN/FINISH), which, by coindexation, values the matrix Voice. Then the matrix Voice values the Restructuring Voice in both ϕ and ID, with these features further valuing the embedded v. The ID features on v are in brackets since their presence does not affect their interpretation.

(55)



To sum up, the v/Voice feature bundling hypothesis provides a straightforward explanation of the crucial involvement of DO's features in the Restructuring relation, otherwise generally unexpected under BKW's analysis. To wit, while the DO is agreed with by the matrix v, on the interclausal level the relation is established between v/Voice bundles, not by individual verbal heads. As a consequence, downward valuation values both Voice and v.

The final major piece of the proposal is modeling the syntactic deficiency of the embedded clause. One important aspect of the TCC to be modeled is the fact that the embedded verb fails to establish an Agree relation with the DO in the absence of the matrix verb. In the current system, the embedded and the matrix verb act as a complex verb head with respect to agreement, although not forming a complex head in terms of structure (that is, they do not form a constituent). The

[14] At the same, Chechen possesses causative morphology which might suggest independent voice alternations. Of particular importance are the so-called indirect causatives are morphologically as (non-agreeing) suffix and are compatible with both transitives and intransitive structures. Importantly, in both cases, the DO's features may be visible for high functional heads. Although the elaboration of the theory of the Chechen causative is outside the scope of this work, one may preliminarily suggest that the indirect causative constitutes a Voice head (see (Nie 2020) for Voice-over-Voice analysis of Causatives), which licenses the external agentive argument and assigns it Ergative, while this Voice's ϕ features are similarly coindexed with the v and (lower) Voice's features.

deficiency in syntactic licesing is also dissociated from thematic licensing as is commonly seen in passive constructions.

The roots of why the embedded verb cannot agree with the DO independently, I suggest, lie in its featural deficiency. In broad theoretical terms, the lack of the embedded verb's ability to independently probe (or initiate search) has been described in terms of this probe's deficiency (Bhatt 2005). For the TCC, I suggest that the embedded verb's inability to probe independently is tied to it bearing an ID feature. The absence of the subject in the embedded clause in the present system is assumed to be determined by the lack of valued ID feature. For the matrix clause, since its Voice (v/Voice) enters the derivation with its ID feature valued (BKW 2023:3), it only needs to value its ϕ-feature which it does by scanning its domain and potentially finding an Absolutive DO. The embedded structure, by the time it is built, still has its ID feature unvalued and consequently its external argument cannot be interpreted. Building on (Preminger 2017) I suggest that unvalued ID and ϕ on the embedded structure are not independent features and cannot be valued independently – to that effect the embedded verb cannot probe for its ϕ features independently of the ID feature.

The problem of the embedded clause's deficiency can be considered within a more general phenomenon of Parasitic Agreement. In PA configurations, certain probing (most commonly, verbal) structures cannot successfully value its features unless another probing structure agrees with a suitable (nominal) goal. This position can be illustrated by Hindi infinitival constructions where the embedded structure is equally syntactically defective and cannot probe in the absence of the matrix verb (Bhatt 2005, Chandra 2007, Keine 2023). Whatever the ultimate reason for Chechen restructuring infinitives to be unable to probe independently, this property of theirs is shared by a number of deficient verbal strucures crosslinguistically; the account of their distribution is outside the scope of this work.

(56) **Hindi-Urdu Parasitic Agreement**

a. laṛkõ-ne [**ṭehnii** kaaṭ-**nii**] chaah-**ii** **thii**
boys.M-ERG branch.F cut-INF.F.SG want-PERF.F.SG be.PST.F.SG
'The boys had wanted to cut the branch.'

b. *laṛke* [ṭehnii kaaṭ-**naa**] chaah-*te* *the*
boys.M branch.F cut-INF.DFLT want-IMPERF.M.PL be.PST.M.PL
'The boys want to cut the branch.'

c. **laṛke* [**ṭehnii** kaaṭ-**nii**] chaah-*te* *the*
boys.M branch.F cut-INF.F.SG want-IMPERF.M.PL be.PST.M.PL
Intended: 'The boys want cut the branch.'

(Keine 2023: 6, ex 9; adapted from Bhatt 2005:761–762, ex. (6a), (7a,b))

Now, let's consider a hypothetical illicit derivation where an embedded verbal structure merges with an intransitive verb. To recall, such structures (see example (1b), repeated below as (57)), involve no Absolutive DP in the embedded structure. In such a structure, the ungrammaticality arises because (a) the matrix predicate fails to find a suitable goal to value its ϕ-features and (b) the default agreement is unavailable in the language.

(57) a. *So/*Asa ida d'a-d-oli-ra
I.NOM/I.ERG run PRF-N-begin-RPST
'I began running.'

b. *Urok d'a-j-oli-ra
lesson PRF-F-begin-RPST
int. 'The lesson began.'

The restructuring verbs (*begin* and *finish*) are assumed to c-select Voice_{R} which prevents structures of larger size to appear in their complement position and subsequently prevents causative and negation morphology, see the examples below.

(58) **Restructuring prevents embedded predicates from merging CAUS and NEG**

a. *Asa kniga-š ca-j-eša d'a-j-oli-ra
I.ERG book-PL NEG-F-read PRF-F-begin-RPST
int. 'I began not reading books.'

b. *Asa cynga kniga j-eši-ta d'a-j-oli-ra
I.ERG he.ALL book F-read-CAUS PRF-F-begin-RPST
int. 'I began making him read a book.'

For clausal infinitival complementation under intransitive matrix verbs, where no transitivity and structural deficiency is observed, I suggest that such clauses contain structures of the VoiceP/NegP size (see (Wurmbrand and Lohninger 2020) for a typology of sentential complementation). Crucially, no featural dependency in ϕ-features is involved, as evidenced by agreement: the embedded verb agrees with the embedded object while the matrix verb agrees with the matrix subject. The embedded clause's dependency in interpretation is supposed to be established by Control relation (perhaps, mediated by the PRO).

(59) **Transitive and intransitive complementation with non-TC matrix verbs**

a. So_i PRO_i kniga j-eša v-ola<v>eli-ra
I.ABS book F-read M-begin-RPST
'I began reading a book.'

b. So_i PRO_i ida v-ola<v>eli-ra
I.NOM run PRF-M-begin-RPST
'I began running.'

4 Discussion

4.1 Implications for the theory of restructuring

The system proposed in this paper seeks to explain the Transitivity Requirement by suggesting that (a) the whole construction involves voice restructuring and (b) the matrix verb needs to agree with an Absolutive DP, to which it may bear no thematic relation.

Perhaps, the most interesting feature of this system is the fact that the matrix verb's agreement with the DO may have direct consequences for the restructuring relation, since the matrix clause passes its ϕ-features to the embedded clause. I argued that this is due to the close featural association between v and Voice found in the Chechen language. In this respect, this type of restructuring can be contrasted with other cases of Restructuring in WKB's system such as Long Object Movement, as well as Crossed control, where the featural dependency is established in features specific to Voice such as Passive or Patient voice. In this way, the TCC expands the typological landscape of Restructuring by providing evidence that Restructuring relations can be established even in languages without Voice specifications.

What remains an intriguing open question is whether different voice specification such as PASS can be ultimately reduced to ϕ-features, which would make possible for a more general theory of Restructuring based on ϕ-dependencies.

It is worth noting that the Transitivity Requirement in TCC can be directly compared to an analogous requirement in LOM, where the Restructuring relation is found with passivized (i.e. underlyingly transitive) embedded clauses[15]. Although not universal, the relatively high frequency of long distance dependencies associated with Voice Restructuring can be explained by suggesting that it is more likely for deficient structures, which the embedded clauses in Voice Restructuring are, to lack full licensing possibilities for their core arguments, most prominently, DOs. What the Chechen data shows is that such licensing deficiency is in principle independent of case computation – to that effect, embedded verbs in VR can fail to agree with their thematic objects in those cases where such arguments can be case-licensed in situ.

Apart from assuming v/Voice feature bundling, the proposed system also departs from BKW's systems in several important aspects. First, I suggest that the (lack of) subject's licensing is unrelated to case computation, and the reason why the DO raises and subsequently agrees with the matrix verb cannot be resorted to Burzio reasoning. Second, unlike WKB's system which operates with features responsible for Voice specifications, in the current system, the interclausal

[15]See examples of clausal embeddings with impersonal passivization in German, as well as some discussion, in Pitteroff and Schäfer (2019)

dependency is just in ϕ (as well as ID). Perhaps, the strongest evidence from the non-dependent nature of Absolutive assignment can be drawn from structures like the ones in ex. (7), repeated below.

(60) a. Musa bazar-a v-oedu
Musa.V.ABS market-ALL V-go.PRS
'Musa goes to the market'

b. Staka ohwa-d-yzh-ira
glass.D.ABS.SG PVERB-D-fall-RPST
'The glass fell'

c. Ruslan-a bepig ursa-ca d-oxado
Ruslan-ERG bread.D.ABS.SG knife-INST.SG D-cut.PRES
'Ruslan cuts bread with a knife.'

As these examples show, Absolutive argument can be licensed both in Internal and External argument positions and – for internal arguments – both with and without another core argument in the clause. To conclude, there is no evidence that Absolutive case assignment is sensitive to the presence of the external argument in the clause, and consequently, that Burzio reasoning can be applied.

4.2 Default agreement and licensing

Another implication that the TCC data provides concerns the status of default agreement in syntactic lisensing. The syntactic field has generally concurred that a failure for a Probe to find a suitable goal is only possible in the case a default agreement option is available (Preminger 2014) (Béjar 2008), a.o,.

Such position is observed for instance in Hindi Parasitic Agreement where the embedded infinitive is demonstrably unable to probe independently of the matrix verb. In the case where

the embedded verb's probing is dissociated from the infinitive, the infinitive fails to find a suitable goal and appears with default agreement morphology.

What the TCC suggests is that the default strategy might not be universally crosslinguistically available, and that the unavailability of the default option can lead to the crash of the derivation. An emerging conclusion seems to be that the availability of the default agreement option is a morphosyntactic parameter which affects the properties of the Parasisitic Agreement in different languages.

5 Conclusion

In this paper, I have considered the Chechen Transitivity Construction. I suggested that the Transitivity Requirement, i.e. the need of the matrix transitive verb to embed a transitive structure is a result of an interplay of several parameters: the need of the matrix verb to have an agreeble object, a morphosyntactic dependency between the matrix and the embedded verb and the lack of the default agreement option in the language.

I showed that the Transitivity Concord Construction can be considered a subtype of the Voice Restructuring relation where the embedded structure is deficient in not containing a subject, as well as well as other morphosyntactic features. I suggested that unlike other established cases of VR such as Long Object Movement or Crossed Control, such a morphological dependency can be established in a language which lacks designated Voice features by means of ϕ-valuation.

In a broader typological perspective, the comparison of the Chechen TCC with other restructuring constructions such as Long Distance passive suggests that languages of different alignment types may possess a similar embedding configuration where a syntactic relationship exists between the matrix verb and the embedded object. The ingredients of such configuration include: the transitivity of the matrix verb, the lack of the subject and downward dependency between the matrix and the embedded verbs.

Another potential implication that TCC provides is the one for the theory of infinitives. While

infinitives are in general associated with morphological deficiency, many languages possess infinitival clauses with rich morphological agreement (see for instance (Landau 2004), (Kapetangianni 2010), (Todorović and Wurmbrand 2020) for finite control). Languages with object agreeement, especially Ergative languages like Hindi or Chechen, where infinitival structures of even small size, like VP, are in general expected to bear agreement morphology, can provide an effective testground for any theory of how agreement and syntactic deficiency interact. To this effect, Chechen adds to the evidence that infinitives may exhibit morphosyntactic

Although mutliple cases of defective agreement have been in the literature what is missing is a comprehensive theory of morphosyntactic deficiency possessing a predictive power of where and under which cirsumstances the syntactic deficiency appears. I leave the elaboration of such a theory for future.

6 Bibliography

Bárány, A., van Der Wal, J. (2022). We don't agree (only) upward. Linguistic Inquiry, 53(3), 501-521.

Bhatt, Rajesh. 2005. Long distance agreement in Hindi-Urdu. Natural Language and Linguistic Theory 23: 757–807.

Bobaljik, J. D., Wurmbrand, S. (2004). Anti-reconstruction effects are antireconstruction effects. In Proceedings of the 2003 annual conference of the Canadian Linguistic Association (pp. 13-25).

Bryant, S., Kovač, I., Wurmbrand, S. (2023). The syntax and semantics of Voice restructuring.

Chomsky, N. (2000): Minimalist Inquiries: the Framework. In: R. Martin, D. Michaels, J. Uriagereka, eds, Step by step. MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., pp. 89-156.

Coon, Jessica. (2009). A biclausal analysis of aspect based split ergativity.

Coon, J., Preminger, O. (2011, January). Transitivity in Chol: A new argument for the Split VP Hypothesis. In Proceedings of the NELS (Vol. 41).

Deal, A. R. (2010). Ergative case and the transitive subject: A view from Nez Perce. Natural Language Linguistic Theory, 28, 73-120.

Dotton, Z., Wagner J. (2017). A Grammar of Chechen.

Folli, R., Harley, H., Karimi, S. (2005). Determinants of event type in Persian complex predicates. Lingua, 115(10), 1365-1401.

Hale, K., Keyser, S. J. (1993). On argument structure and the lexical expression of syntactic relations. An annotated syntax reader, 312-327.

Harley, H. (2017). The "bundling" hypothesis and the disparate functions of little v. The verbal domain, 3, 3-28.

Harley, H. (2017). The "bundling" hypothesis and the disparate functions of little v. The verbal domain, 3, 3-28.

Holisky, D. A. (1987). The case of the intransitive subject in Tsova-Tush (Batsbi). Lingua, 71(1-4), 103-132.

Kazenin, Konstantin. (2001). Umen'šenie perexodnosti: Binominativnaja konstrukcija. In Aleksandr E. Kibrik, ed. Bagvalinskij jazyk. Moscow: Nasledie, 394–399.

Khalidov, A. I., Timaev, A. D., and Ovkhadov, M. R. (2013). Grammatika chechenskogo yazyka.

Keine, S. (2023) -Feature sharing.

Komen, Erwin R., Zarina Molochieva Johanna Nichols. (2021). Chechen and Ingush. In Maria Polinsky (ed.), The Oxford handbook of languages of the Caucasus, 317–365. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kratzer, A. (1994). On external arguments. University of Massachusetts occasional papers in linguistics, 20(1), 7.

Kratzer, A. (1996). Severing the external argument from its verb. Phrase structure and the lexicon, 109-137.

Laka, I. (2006). Deriving split ergativity in the progressive. In Ergativity (pp. 173-195). Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.

Marantz, A. (1997). No escape from syntax: Don't try morphological analysis in the privacy

of your own lexicon. University of Pennsylvania working papers in linguistics, 4(2), 14.

Müller, G. (2021). Long-distance passives by structure removal. In Passives cross-linguistically (pp. 15-63). Brill.

Nichols, J. (2011). Ingush grammar (Vol. 143). Univ of California Press.

Paul, I., Travis, L., Vander Klok, J., Wurmbrand, S. (2021). Crossed control as voice restructuring. In Proceedings of the 2021 Annual Conference of the Canadian Linguistic Association (pp. 1-13). Canadian Linguistics Association.

Pitteroff, M., and Schäfer, F. (2019). Implicit control crosslinguistically. Language, 95(1), 136-184.

Preminger, O. (2014). Agreement and its failures (Vol. 68). MIT press.